

245 Avenue Rd.  
Levant, ME, 04456

April 15, 2017

RSU 22  
Hampden Academy  
89 Western Ave.  
Hampden, ME 04444

Dear Hiring Committee:

I am applying for the position of social studies teacher at the high school level. I have heard wonderful things about your school and the program there, and I actively sought out your school as it is, by all accounts, a wonderful place to work. I have a strong commitment to creating a classroom culture that is both engaging and academically rigorous.

I have spent three years tutoring in a remedial after-school program out of a middle school, I have taught students from all grade levels, with a variety of special needs, in every subject. Furthermore, I took the opportunity, during my practicum placement, to teach a social studies lesson to the students who were receiving services in the resource room in addition to the regular program of teaching in the general education classroom. Additionally, I will spend the next summer working at a summer camp, teaching woodshop, as well as overseeing one of the cabins. I have variety of experiences teaching students, from all walks of life about a great deal of subjects. I work very hard to connect to the students and create a classroom community.

Thank you for your consideration,

Nicholas J. Pinkham

# Nicholas Pinkham

245 Avenue Rd.  
Levant, ME 04456

nicholaspinkham0@gmail.com  
(207) 500-1154

**Summary of Qualifications:** A knowledgeable and compassionate professional, with a deep-seated commitment to help students achieve academic and personal excellence.

**Education:** University of Maine at Farmington; Farmington, Maine

Bachelors' of Science: Secondary Education, Concentration: Social Studies; Graduation: 2018

GPA: 3.79, Latin Honors:

Hermon High School; Hermon, Maine

Graduation: 2014

**Experience:** Tutor, 2014-Present

Spruce Mountain After-School, Jay, Maine

- Provided remedial education for a variety of students across all subject areas.
- Oversaw recreational after-school programming.

**Experience:** Practicum, Fall 2015

Mount Blue Middle School, Farmington, ME

- Observed a middle school Social Studies Classroom.
- Taught several lessons in a middle school Social Studies Classroom.
- Observed and taught in a special education classroom.

**Experience:** Camp Counselor, June 2017-August 2017

Camp Nashoba North, Raymond, Maine

**Activities/Leadership Positions:** UMF Men's Rugby Football Club, Treasurer, Fall 2016-

Present

**Software Skills:** Proficient in Microsoft programs, basic website design (Weebly, Wikispaces, Google +, et cetera...)

Additional:

Conversant in Spanish

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## **References:**

Elizabeth Yeaton-Evans, Advisor  
University of Maine at Farmington  
eevans@maine.edu

Dixie Bonnevie, Director of After-School Programming  
Spruce Mountain Middle School  
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Chris O'Brien, Chairperson: Division of Social Sciences and Business  
University of Maine at Farmington  
christopher.obrien@maine.edu

## Philosophy Abstract

The purpose of school is to teach the eternal truths of the world and to cultivate an inquisitive and rational mind. This theory works well with Idealism, Rationalism, and Scholasticism. This educational system emphasizes a combination of the Idealist and Rationalist curricula, with literature, history, philosophy, as well as mathematics (Euclidian Geometry especially), natural science, and physics. There is a great emphasis on morality and on the cultivation of rational thought. Students would be taught to question and to reason logically.

The general premise behind my classroom design is that the entire class will frequently be participating in discussions, and thus all the students should be able to see each other. The students' desks will be arranged in a horseshoe, facing a white board. I will stand in front of the whiteboard, alternately lecturing, facilitating the discussion, or writing down the important parts of the discussion on the board. The discussions will center around political philosophy and the basis of our institutions, not just their workings but the deeper reasons behind their structure, the inherently interesting nature of this content area is sure to engage students. The motivation in this classroom derives primarily from the fact that most of the in-class time is spent in broad discussion, attempting to answer important, thought provoking questions, this is a time-honored teaching strategy dating back to the Socratic seminar.

Most of the graded assignments for this class will be in essay format. The primary form of assessment will be short weekly essays; these will be centered around the content we are discussing in class. These essays will be a way for me to remain apprised of how the students are understanding the content, and will allow me to structure the lessons around the students' needs. These small essays will also allow the students as much practice as possible writing in the 5-paragraph essay format, which while it can seem stifling to experienced writers provides much needed structure and coherency to novices. At the end of every unit there will be a larger research paper, the topic is student selected and will require research outside of class, this will allow me to teach research techniques during the normal running of class.

The general atmosphere of the classroom should be one of inquiry, I will present a topic, in the form of a question, and the class will work its way towards an answer gradually, through discussion and debate. This challenging and questioning of ideas only works if it is done cordially, and with utmost civility.

My job as teacher will be to guide the students towards the information that they need to know. I will provide the basic background data that they need by providing readings and occasional lectures. The most role I will play is that of moderator, asking targeted questions to the class at large to steer their thoughts towards the knowledge that they need.

(Questions from the Resume)

1.

I interpret the phrase “optimal learning for all students” to be aiding all students to reach their full potential. This belief links back to my teaching philosophy, and the fundamental beliefs that drive my educational practices. The two philosophies that interest me are perennialism and essentialism. The perennialist educator’s ultimate goal is that every student reach the transcendent realms of beauty and enlightenment that lie in the comprehension of high-minded academic subjects. The essentialist educator seeks to impart basic skills to their students, “reading, ‘riting, and ‘rithmetic” as the old mantra goes, somewhere between these two philosophies is a student worthy of graduating high school, a student with the skills to become a lifelong learner and the appreciation of knowledge necessary to continue learning in his life after school. Optimal learning for all students is that they know not only those skills necessary for survival in our society but, also, to paraphrase C.S. Lewis “those things which have no survival value, but rather give value to survival.”

2.

One of the simplest ways in which a teacher specifically, and a school district more generally, can provide support all students is to implement a Response to Intervention program, wherein the students have weekly, or perhaps even daily access to all of their teachers, in order to receive additional help in any areas that they need, as well as additional time in school to work on their assignments during school hours. As far as supporting economically disadvantaged students, teachers can begin by simplifying their assignments. If a student doesn’t have access to a computer out of school hours, then the teacher can either provide time in class to complete the assignment, or accept handwritten assignments. In class assessments can be particularly helpful, in lieu of more traditional homework, as certain students may not have the ability to complete assignments outside of school. Finally, an afterschool program can be particularly advantageous to struggling students, especially if the school provides transportation

3.

I would encourage my students to “achieve individual excellence” by encouraging them to constantly improve their skills through repetition and practice. One of the ways I will help my students to improve their abilities is by focusing a part of my lessons on the specific skills necessary to work in the social sciences, specifically the mechanics of academic writing. I would begin with a lesson on this in the first week of school, and every week students will write a short essay, in the basic five paragraph format, and every week the students will receive their graded essays back and hopefully incorporate the constructive criticism into their essays going forwards. As the year progresses so too will their ability to lay out and defend an argument in a concise and erudite manner. Additionally, much of my lessons will revolve around the Socratic Seminar, and the discussion of ideas, through constant questioning of claims and spirited debate, students will learn to question their own beliefs and assumptions and to constantly strive for a higher standard of intellectual rigor in their own lives. Through these two practices students will hopefully learn to strive for constant improvement, and will thus achieve intellectual excellence.